



**Training Partnerships for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness:  
A Conference to Build Stronger Partnerships On Disaster Response Training**

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## MEETING NOTES FROM OSHA PLENARY: THE NEW DISASTER SITE WORKER COURSE

**Thursday, April 22**

### **OSHA Plenary**

*Moderator: Dr. Bruce Lippy*

Dr. Bruce Lippy, Director of the National Clearinghouse, opened the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Plenary by stating the theme of the session, which was to review the status of the disaster site worker course being developed jointly with NIEHS and its grantees.

Dr. Henry Payne, Director of OSHA Office of Training and Education (OTI) began the plenary with a brief discussion on OSHA and its objective to set and to implement national safety and health standards for emergency responders. He then talked about what OSHA is currently doing in emergency preparedness training. Dr. Payne explained that following September 11th, OSHA sought to better serve its employees and recognized the need to internally train its employees in the case of emergency situations. Thus, in July 2003, OSHA put together an awareness-training program that served the aforementioned purpose.

Dr. Payne further noted that when responding to an emergency situation, the best knowledge that responders should receive is that about worker safety and health. Thus, responders should be advised to complete emergency preparedness training for which they can receive a certification card for the 16-hour and/or 10-hour construction course. Dr. Payne concluded his talk by proposing to Chip Hughes of NIEHS that both agencies have semi-annual meetings to look at disaster and training issues and to see where both agencies can cooperate to make better use of the materials that the grantees develop.

Pete Stafford, Director of the Center to Protect Workers' Rights (CPWR), was the next panelist to address the audience. He described his organization; its background in disaster response training; and the training structure within the Building Trades to deliver training to skilled support personnel, including 2,500 training centers nationally that annually train over 500,000 construction workers. Mr. Stafford emphasized the importance of the on-site training of approximately 1300 construction workers at Ground Zero immediately following September 11, 2001. The focus of this immediate training was personal protective equipment (specifically for respiratory protection), hazard identification, in decontamination, and incident command.

The lessons learned resulted in the development of CPWR's DVD training program for skilled support personnel. Over 4,000 instructors will be trained to deliver the program, with over 700 trained to date. The model, in collaboration with OSHA as a regional training institute, will allow CPWR and its affiliated building trades unions to train thousands of their members and prepare them to support first responders when called upon in their role as skilled support personnel. Mr. Stafford concluded his talk by stating that CPWR has worked with OSHA to assist them with the agency's training programs.

The third panelist, Cathy Cronin, Coordinator of the OSHA Construction Outreach Program, commented that not enough skilled support personnel have received training even though the available hazwoper training programs are excellent. Furthermore, Ms. Cronin stated that OSHA has decided to focus their training programs as all hazard courses – not just ones created for weapons of mass destruction training only.

She also explained that through lessons learned, OSHA has established hands-on, skills-training components, which have been included in new curricula. Also, OSHA has recognized the need for advanced respiratory protection training and has used a CPWR DVD to create a 16-hour curriculum program.

More so, Ms. Cronin noted that OSHA has been encouraging workers to obtain hazwoper training. In doing so, the agency has issued a Program Card, which verifies that workers have successfully completed the necessary levels of accredited training programs and any other additional programs that individual workers choose to take. Additionally, OSHA is expecting to give out a second card for trainers who complete a four-day course. This training is expected to be available by July. Ms. Cronin said that trainers must be authorized in outreach construction, completed

40-hours of training, and have three years of experience as a safety and health trainer. This card will have an expiration date.

In closing, Ms. Cronin directed the audience to read OSHA's "Inside the Green Line" report available at the following website:  
<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3189.pdf>.

Doug Feil, Director of Environmental Programs at Kirkwood Community College (KCC) was the fourth presenter during the OSHA Plenary. Mr. Feil explained how KCC, as part of an OSHA pilot program, used OSHA's education centers to offer a six-day train-the-trainer (TTT) class. These TTT classes are targeted for responders, other than skilled support personnel, who would appear at the incident site during the latter portions of an emergency such as the consequence management or recovery phase stage. Amongst other groups, public health representatives were invited as were veterinarians.

Mr. Feil explained that the first three days of the TTT classes related and talked to the programs OSHA offered while the last three days focused on different topics. The KCC classes trained the trainers on how to analyze incidents and how to develop training for the hazards specific to that site. Mr. Feil noted that trainers who participated were asked to bring maps and information specific to their communities. The trainers then looked at site safety plans and practiced developing efficient on-site training program.

The final panelist was Stew Burkhammer, the Director of OSHA Office of Construction Services. Mr. Burkhammer challenged the audience to think about the purpose of developing the training programs and to really think about why responders need the training to begin with. Understanding what training is about can help with compliance of regulations and response to unexpected incidences on-site. He then compared his experiences with health and safety training at the Kuwait oil fields and at Ground Zero in New York to elucidate this point.

Mr. Burkhammer explained how the challenge in Kuwait centered on first explaining safety and health and then developing a safety and health program for twenty-three nationalities. At Ground Zero, he and his team were challenged with two things: (1) getting all the involved agencies, twenty-six in total, to approve the response plan before it could be implemented; and (2) training over ten thousand people with different skills and occupations.

These two experiences shed light on an important lesson, which is to proactively plan for emergency incidents in a manner that is collective and cooperative. The way to achieve this objective, Mr. Burkhammer alluded to, is via effective training - training that addresses roles, responsibilities, and capabilities.

The OSHA Plenary ended with a question and answer period. Participants asked questions about enforcement in emergency situations, the need to train chemical plant employees, and the adequacy of the level of protection implemented at Ground zero. One participant asked how to define a disaster site compared to a HAZWOPER site to which Donald Elisburg replied that "Current statute does not speak to the Superfund, it never has. The issue as to which regulations apply is based on whether or not the site is an uncontrolled hazardous waste site."